

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

ESTABLISHED BY CONGRESS MAY 17, 1910

J. CARTER BROWN, Chairman
PHILIP W. BUCHEN
VICTORINE DU PONT HOMSEY
ELI S. JACOBS
FREDERICK D. NICHOLS
KEVIN ROCHE
EDWARD D. STONE, JR.
CHARLES H. ATHERTON, Secretary

708 JACKSON PLACE, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20006
202-566-1066

MINUTES OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

3 September 1980

The meeting convened at 10:00 a.m. in the Commission of Fine Arts offices at 708 Jackson Place, N. W., Washington, D. C.

Members Present:

Hon. J. Carter Brown, Chairman
Hon. Philip W. Buchen
Hon. Victorine DuPont Homsey
Hon. Eli S. Jacobs
Hon. Frederick D. Nichols

Staff Present:

Mr. Charles H. Atherton, Secretary
Mr. Donald B. Myer, Assistant Secretary
Mr. Jeffrey R. Carson
Mrs. Sue Kohler
Mr. Travis McDonald, Jr.
Mr. Richard Ryan

National Capital Planning Commission Staff Present:

Mr. George Oberlander

I. EXECUTIVE SESSION

A. Fiscal Year 1982 Budget. The Secretary reported that the Commission would request \$333,000 for fiscal year 1982, and that \$39,000 of this represented the total estimated cost of printing the second volume of Sixteenth Street Architecture. Other than this one large sum, he said the budget would remain essentially the same as for the preceding year. The Chairman added that it had been possible to cut travel costs somewhat, an item which had been questioned previously.

B. Appointments to the Joint Committee on Landmarks. The members reviewed a list of names submitted by the Mayor and they were all unanimously approved. The Secretary said a letter would be written to the Mayor transmitting this approval.

EXHIBIT A and A-1

II. ADMINISTRATION

A. Dates of next meetings, approved as: 7 October 1980
4 November 1980

B. Minutes of 29 July 1980 meeting, approved.

C. Report on Dutch Elm Disease Task Force. The Secretary reported that the National Capital Planning Commission had organized a task force to study the disease and means to control it. Staff member Jeffrey Carson said that the result of the task force had been a plan to mark off a small area of the city, including the Mall and Constitution Avenue, in which the elms would be protected and maintained. In other areas of the city, according to the task force plan, diseased or dead elms would be replaced with other species. The Secretary said that, unknown to the planning commission, the city's tree department had been conducting an experiment whereby still healthy but beetle infested trees were killed by girdling and by the injection of a chemical that killed eighty percent of the beetles and thus, supposedly, limited their spread. Consequently, he said, there were large numbers of dead elms in northwest Washington and no money in the budget for removing or replacing them.

The members were not happy with the city's tree killing experiment, but were at least encouraged by the planning commission's plan to provide protection for those elms in the monumental core of the city. The members authorized sending the Mayor a letter expressing the Commission's concern about the effect this summer experiment will have on the appearance of the city. EXHIBIT B

D. CFA 3/SE/80-1, Hotel incentive zone, District position paper relating to Zoning Commission Public Hearing, Case 80-3 and 80-4, 20 September 1980. D. C. Office of Planning and Development. The Secretary reported that this zone would cover an irregular area near the convention center, between 15th and East Capitol Streets, bounded on the north by Massachusetts Avenue and on the south by H or I Streets. It would include a part of Chinatown. The objective is to provide adequate hotel accommodations to serve the convention center and also high density residential development (apartments) to revitalize what is now a depressed area. The plan proposes an increase in both height and FAR for hotel and residential structures in order to encourage this type of development rather than office buildings. The Secretary said that at this time he was just bringing the matter to the attention of the members and asking for approval to attend and perhaps testify at the hearing scheduled for 20 September 1980. Approval was granted unanimously.

III. SUBMISSIONS AND REVIEWS

A. District of Columbia Department of Housing and Community Development.1. Old Georgetown Act

a. O.G. 80-125, 1220-36 31st Street, N. W. Master plan for new construction, alteration and demolition at Hamilton Arms. The Assistant Secretary noted that this submission was for the purpose of presenting a master plan for the entire area, shown on a model and on plans and elevation drawings. He reviewed the Commission's approval in July of demolition of a small building on the west alley immediately south of the entrance into the complex, and of the Reid house in the center of the property, providing that the design of a replacement structure of some kind be seen first. A new structure was considered necessary to preserve the spatial relationships in the garden now provided by the Reid house. Staff member Sue Kohler reported that her statement at the July meeting that the small alley building might be of recent vintage had been born out by a building permit search which had disclosed that it had been erected in 1942 as a shed in which to repair furniture.

Architect Richard Stauffer was then introduced and showed new designs for the infill buildings on the alleys. On the west alley, the facades of the two 1864 houses had been retained, and the new building, simple in design, filled the old entrance area and the space now taken by the 1942 shed. It was set back from the alley, as before, with a row of trees in front and a stone wall and entrance gate. The south alley building had been moved closer to the alley, as requested, and there had been some changes to the facade. Taking the place of the Reid house was a gazebo and more planting and paths than in the previous scheme.

Georgetown Board member Theodore Sande submitted the Board's report and said that the Board had found the concept acceptable but wanted to see a more detailed study of the new buildings. He said that, personally, he thought the roofs on the new buildings were too steep and the gazebo lacking in character. He commented that while no one would deny the historical importance of Hamilton Arms, it must be realized that it was also a living community and there was a point at which some new architecture would have to be accepted.

Representatives from several groups and individual citizens asked to comment. Architect Mark McInturf said the spatial experience in the center of the project was still not right and the gazebo did not accomplish what the Reid house did in that respect. He then read

Landmark Committee member Hugh Jacobsen's statement urging that no demolition be allowed at Hamilton Arms. Mr. Stauffer commented that Mr. Jacobsen was the only member of the Committee who took that position.

Judith Sobol, executive director of Don't Tear It Down, said that two years ago the Commission of Fine Arts had urged maximum preservation at Hamilton Arms, but a number of items in the garden had been demolished and buildings had deteriorated; thus the Commission had condoned demolition by neglect. She thought the Commission should make up its mind whether it wanted demolition or preservation. She also criticized the gazebo concept, saying it could not be considered a replacement for a house.

Donald Shannon, president of the Georgetown Citizens' Association, thought the roofs on the new buildings were much too steep and the facade of the south alley building too "busy".

Mark Looney distributed a Washington Post article on the preservation of old buildings and said the Commission should enforce its previous recommendation that nothing be demolished. He said that no good reasons have been given as to why the Reid house must come down; even Mr. Stauffer's engineer did not say it could not be repaired. He also stated that the Georgetown Board had not discussed the design of the new buildings. The Assistant Secretary interrupted at this point and said that for the record he would like to state that this was not true.

The Chairman noted that the Commission's recommendation had been for maximum feasible preservation and that, regrettably, the Reid house was essentially beyond repair. Both Mrs. Homsey and Mr. Nichols commented that it would be impossible to reconstruct it and try to reproduce the kind of run-down charm it had or to try to recreate the decorative motifs. All agreed, however, that the gazebo replacement should be more fanciful and needed further study. There was also a consensus that the roofs of the new buildings were too steep. The Assistant Secretary reminded the members that this submission was for approval of the master plan concept only, and as there were no objections to that, it was unanimously approved, with details to be seen later.

b. Appendix 1, approved.

2. Shipstead-Luce Act

a. S.L. 80-64, 615 15th Street, N. W. Keith-Albee building, entrance modification. The Assistant Secretary explained

that the entrance referred to was the former Keith theatre entrance and asked staff member Jeffrey Carson to review the history of this element. Mr. Carson showed an old photograph of the original marquee and entrance; he said the architects had originally intended to restore or recreate the three semicircular arched openings, but then came to the conclusion that they would conflict with the more monumental Metropolitan Bank entrance, which will be the major opening into the interior court.

Architect David Childs from Skidmore, Owings & Merrill was introduced and presented the modification. The Chairman cross-examined him as to why the three arches could not be preserved. He related that there was nothing left of the old arched openings, that they would have to be entirely recreated, and that the entrance as a whole was something of an architectural aberration as it was not centered and interrupted a pilaster which defined a bay. He said he would prefer to continue the same type of simple opening seen elsewhere on the ground floor of the building. There was no objection to this and the entrance modification was unanimously approved.

b. Appendix 2, approved.

B. Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers

1. CFA 3/SE/80-2, Washington Aqueduct Division. Revised designs for proposed water treatment plant at McMillan Reservation. The Assistant Secretary reviewed the Commission's previous request (13 May 1980) for simplification of this building and then introduced Mr. C. C. Petersen from the Army, and the designer, Mr. Don Rhodes. Mr. Rhodes pointed out on a drawing the areas which had been redesigned in an attempt at simplification, but Mr. Nichols thought the north elevation was still too disorganized. He was particularly disturbed by the varying sizes of the doors. Mr. Rhodes said the functions of the building had dictated much of the exterior design and so it would be difficult to make any significant changes. He said, however, that he would try to make this elevation less confusing. The Chairman was concerned about the view from Children's Hospital and cautioned against placing truck entrances where they could be seen from this viewpoint. The design was unanimously approved, subject to the preceding requests. EXHIBIT C

C. Department of the Army, The Institute of Heraldry

1. CFA 3/SE/80-3, Design for achievement medal for the United States Air Force. The Secretary showed drawings of this traditional heraldic medal, prepared by the Institute of Heraldry. The

medal was unanimously approved, with the recommendation, however, that the words "Air Force" on the reverse follow the curve of the medal rather than being placed on a horizontal line. EXHIBIT D

D. Department of the Treasury, Bureau of the Mint

1. CFA 3/SE/80-4, Designs for Red Cross medal, as authorized by P.L. 96-138. The Secretary introduced George Schafer from the Mint, who showed the members drawings of both sides of this medal. On the obverse was a representation of one person comforting another and the words, "People Helping People, 1881-1981, A Medal of the Congress." On the reverse was the Red Cross symbol and the words, "American Red Cross - Ready for a New Century." The design was unanimously approved. EXHIBIT E

E. District of Columbia, Department of Transportation Public Space Committee.

1. CFA 3/SE/80-5, C & P Telephone Company, proposed kiosk design for telephones. The Secretary explained that the telephone company wanted the Commission's reaction to this design before submitting it to the city's Public Space Committee. He showed photographs of a kiosk shaped like a telephone receiver; it was unanimously disapproved as being unsuitable and the recommendation was made that the telephone company use the design reviewed and approved at the 27 June 1978 meeting of the Commission. EXHIBIT F

The meeting was adjourned at 11:15 a.m.

Signed,



Charles H. Atherton
Secretary

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708 JACKSON PLACE, N.W.
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September 15, 1980

Dear Mayor Barry:

In response to our communication with you and David Childs, Chairman of the National Capital Planning Commission, the Commission approved the following appointments to the Joint Committee on Landmarks during its September 3, 1980 meeting:

Henry H. Brylawski
Harold K. Skramstad
Clifford Evans
Hector J. Alvarez
Hugh Newell Jacobsen
Charles I. Cassell
Louis Hutchinson
Ernest Harper
John D. Sulton
George Hartman
Jerome W. Lindsey

We note that there will be two vacancies in the next few months. For the sake of continuity as well as for their excellent qualifications we recommend the reappointment of Betty Culpepper and Charles McLaughlin, both first term incumbents.

We look forward to working with you and the Planning Commission to assure an effective role in the community for the Joint Committee, particularly as it relates to preservation and stabilization of Washington's city-wide residential communities.

Sincerely yours,



J. Carter Brown
Chairman

The Honorable
Marion Barry
Mayor
District Building
Washington, D.C. 20001
Room 520

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September 15, 1980

Dear David:

The Commission reviewed appointments to the Joint Committee on Landmarks during its September 3, 1980 meeting. The following were approved:

Henry H. Brylawski
Harold K. Skramstad
Clifford Evans
Hector J. Alvarez
Hugh Newell Jacobsen
Charles I. Cassell
Louis Hutchinson
Ernest Harper
John D. Sulton
George Hartman
Jerome W. Lindsey

We would like to comment on two of the appointments which will expire in the next few months. These are the positions currently filled by Betty Culpepper and Charles McLaughlin, both first term incumbents and candidates worthy of reappointment. They are highly qualified, have served well during their terms, and would provide much needed continuity to the Committee.

We look forward to working with you and the Mayor to bring the Joint Committee up to full strength.

Sincerely yours,



J. Carter Brown
Chairman

The Honorable
David Childs
Chairman
National Capital Planning Commission
1325 G Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20576

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708 JACKSON PLACE, N W

WASHINGTON, D C. 20006

September 23, 1980

Dear Jim:

The Commission is concerned about the Tree Divisions' experiments this summer involving control of Dutch Elm Disease. As you probably know, over one hundred trees were deliberately destroyed in the program.

I do not wish at this time to comment on the program itself which I believe raises many serious questions. Our immediate concern is the removal of the dead trees.

Despite the shortage of funds, we would hope that some way can be found to clear up the remains of this summers' experiment as soon as possible. It is a depressing and ugly sight and a major eyesore in a large part of the city.

In the meantime, the Commission strongly recommends that any further experimenting along these lines be indefinitely suspended until there is adequate opportunity to assess both the experiment and the whole matter of tree preservation and planting on the District streets.

With all best wishes.

Sincerely yours,



Charles H. Atherton
Secretary

Mr. James Clark
Acting Director
D.C. Department of
Transportation
Room 508
Presidential Building
415 12th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20004

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September 15, 1980

Dear Mr. Ways:

The Commission was happy to meet with Mr. Peterson of your office during its September 3, 1980 meeting to discuss design modifications to the proposed water treatment plant at McMillan Reservoir, (CFA 3/SE/80 - 2). We were pleased by the efforts to simplify the façades, particularly the north elevation facing Childrens' Hospital. Of the proposed fenestration patterns the Commission much preferred that shown on the ozalid print, with simple rectilinear windows. In approving the preliminary scheme as presented, we appreciate the fact that your drawings were prepared in very little time and were not consistent in all respects. We would therefore like to review the working drawings prior to the signing of any construction contracts. Also because of the importance of the site, we request that a sample brick panel be erected on the site prior to construction to assure that the selection works well with the surroundings.

We also strongly recommend that planting of an adequate height and thickness be introduced along the edge of the loading area next to Michigan Avenue in order to screen the view from adjacent public facilities such as the hospital grounds.

With all best wishes.

Sincerely yours,



J. Carter Brown
Chairman

Mr. Harry C. Ways
Chief
Washington Aqueduct Division
Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District
5900 MacArthur Boulevard, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20315

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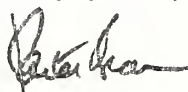
September 15, 1980

Dear Col. Baxter:

The Commission of Fine Arts approved designs for the Air Force Achievement Medal at its September 3, 1980 meeting, (CFA 3/SE/80 -3), with one reservation. We suggest that all lettering on the reverse side follow the circular perimeter, including the words, "Air Force." The name of the recipient would then be the only horizontal element on that side, surrounded by a circle of heavier lettering, and would, we believe, make for a better solution.

With all best wishes.

Sincerely yours,



J. Carter Brown
Chairman

Col. D.K. Baxter
Director
Institute of Heraldry
United States Army
Cameron Station
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

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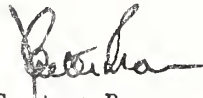
September 15, 1980

Dear Mrs. Hackel:

The Commission of Fine Arts reviewed and approved designs for a Red Cross Medal, as authorized by P.L. 96-138 during our September 3, 1980 meeting, (CFA 3/SE/80 - 4). The reverse side design recalls the memorial sculpture located on the lawn to the rear of Red Cross headquarters and is most appropriate.

With all best wishes.

Sincerely yours,



J. Carter Brown
Chairman

Mrs. Stella Hackel
Director
Bureau of the Mint
Department of the Treasury
501 13th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20220

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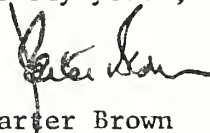
September 22, 1980

Dear Mr. Romanoski:

At the request of the C and P Telephone Company, the Commission of Fine Arts reviewed a proposal for a telephone shaped pay phone booth during its September 3, 1980 meeting, (CFA 3/SE/80 - 5). The design struck the Commission very negatively as being too commercially intrusive. We approved the design you presented on February 22, 1980, which by contrast is far more appropriate, with its quiet simplicity, providing a public service with dignity and taste. Our advice would be to adhere to that single design.

With all best wishes.

Sincerely yours,



J. Carter Brown
Chairman

Mr. Joseph P. Romanoski
Assistant Manager
C & P Telephone Company
6400 Chillum Place, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20012

EXHIBIT F

